

# Assuring Safe and Reliable Drinking

W  
A  
T  
E  
R



## Division of Drinking Water

*The mission of the Division of Drinking Water is to protect the health of the people of Washington State by assuring safe and reliable drinking water.*



The number of contaminants regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act increased from 23 in 1986 to 103 in 2002, and could reach 130 by 2010.

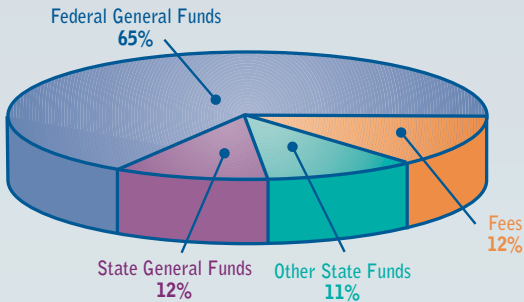
Drinking water protection is an essential public health program that involves cooperation between the division and local health jurisdictions, consumers, water utilities, technical assistance providers, local governments, and other state and federal agencies.

Washington regulates public water systems under both state law and a formal agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency for carrying out the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. The state establishes and enforces minimum standards for drinking water quality, and for water system facilities and operations.

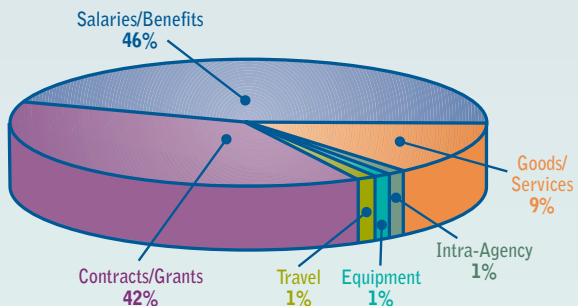
The division has agreements with 34 local health jurisdictions describing roles and responsibilities of the division and each jurisdiction for carrying out state laws regarding the regulation of drinking water systems, particularly very small systems not subject to the Safe Drinking Water Act.

### Sources of Operating Revenue

**Total Operating Revenue: \$31.8 million**



### Drinking Water Program Expenditures



## Prevention and Response

*The division assures drinking water is safe and reliable through programs that rely on prevention as the first line of defense. A variety of planning, technical, and certification assistance helps water systems meet their responsibilities – and avoid potentially health-threatening and costly problems.*



**Technical assistance** – helping water systems solve design, operations, and management problems

**Water quality monitoring and surveillance** – assuring that water systems test drinking water for contaminants

**Water system planning and coordination** – assisting water systems in developing long-range improvement programs, water resource protection and conservation, and the formation of regional water supplies

**Construction plan review and approval** – assuring that new system designs and proposed system expansions meet design standards

**Waterworks operator certification and training** – assuring that public water systems have qualified operators

**Water system security** – assuring that drinking water infrastructure is secure and that systems have emergency response plans

**Compliance** – assuring that water quality and water delivery risks are addressed in a timely manner

## Emergency Response

The division emphasizes a preventative approach to protecting water quality and supply, but when a real or potential public health emergency occurs from bacterial, chemical, or other kinds of contamination in drinking water, responding is the division's highest priority. Disruption in the supply of clean drinking water poses a health risk. Reasons for the disruption include water main breaks, water system distribution or water quality problems, earthquakes, floods, power outages, windstorms, or by acts of vandalism or terrorism.

When an emergency occurs, the division works hand-in-hand with the water system, the community, and the local health jurisdiction as quickly and as often as necessary to get things back to normal. A toll-free, after-hours hotline provides system operators easy access to division specialists.



A water system inspection or “sanitary survey” looks at all aspects of water plant operations, including water sources, pumps, storage tanks, treatment units, filtration plants, records of water monitoring, and future needs.

# Partners For Safe Drinking Water

*The division partners with individuals and organizations, public and private, to assure drinking water in Washington is safe, including:*



The Division of Drinking Water is organized with headquarters located in Olympia and three regional offices in Olympia, Kent, and Spokane.

- Local health jurisdictions.
- Public and private water system operators.
- Technical assistance providers, such as Evergreen Rural Water of Washington, Rural Community Assistance Corporation, and Washington Environmental Training Resource Center.
- Consumers.
- Other state and federal agencies.

## Funding Water System Improvements

Water system capital improvements are critical to the long-term health and economic vitality of Washington's communities. In 2001-03, more than \$37.2 million in federal funds were available to water systems in counties across Washington through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund.

The fund provides low-interest loans to community and nonprofit, non-community water systems for capital improvements that increase public health protection and compliance with drinking water regulations. The Department of Health and the Public Works Board jointly manage the program.

## Keeping Customers Informed

Public water systems are required to test the water they supply, and provide customers with an annual Consumer Confidence Report that includes information about water quality and where it comes from.

Contaminants, bacteria, and minerals that may cause health problems can be present in drinking water. Contaminants that are monitored to protect public health include *E. coli*, nitrates, pesticides, lead, and arsenic.



# Public and Private Water Systems

*“Group A” systems are those that regularly serve 15 or more residential connections or 25 or more people, 60 or more days per year. “Group B” systems usually serve two to 14 connections and fewer than 25 people, or more than 25 people but for fewer than 60 days per year.*

- 4,200 large Group A systems, which serve about 4.85 million residents, are subject to federal regulations.
- 12,700 smaller, Group B systems, which serve about 150,000 residents, are subject to state and local regulations.

About one million residents are served by about 340,000 **private** wells, which are not subject to state or federal regulations.



About 5 million of the state's 5.9 million residents are served by 16,900 public water systems.

## Public Water Systems

A public water system is any system that provides water for drinking, cooking, and sanitation purposes *except* those:

- Serving only one single-family residence.
- With four or fewer connections, all of which serve residences on the same farm.



The Department of Health is an equal opportunity agency. For persons with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 800-525-0127 (TTY 800-833-6388). For additional copies of this publication, call 800-521-0323. This and other publications are available at [www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw).

# Where To Get Answers About Safe Drinking Water

## Drinking Water General Information

800-521-0323

### Public Water System Customers

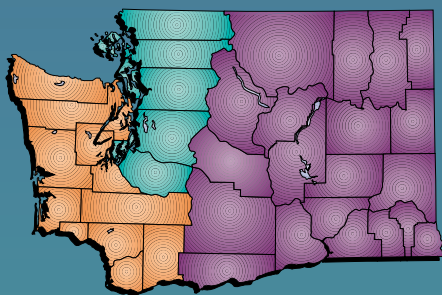
- Your drinking water supplier
- Regional offices - Division of Drinking Water

### Water System Owners/Operators

- Regional offices - Division of Drinking Water
- Local health jurisdictions

### Private Well Owners/Users

- Local health jurisdictions
- Well drilling and service companies



### Northwest Regional Office

20435 72<sup>nd</sup> Ave. S, Suite 200, K17-12 • Kent, WA 98032-2358 • 253-395-6750

### Southwest Regional Office

P.O. Box 47823 • Olympia, WA 98504-7823 • 360-664-0768

### Eastern Regional Office

1500 West Fourth Ave., Suite 305 • Spokane, WA 99204 • 509-456-3115

### Headquarters

P.O. Box 47822 • Olympia, Washington, 98504-7822

General information: 360-236-3100, 800-521-0323

Operator certification: 800-525-2536



HELPING TO ENSURE SAFE AND RELIABLE DRINKING WATER